Operation Mac n' Tap Concept, Phase One

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Introduction

American society is at a crossroads in a wealthy inequality crisis, leaving even some high-income households struggling to both pay rent and put food on the table. The terrible sight of men and women forced to beg for food scraps outside of restaurants just to survive the day is becoming even more common. We are in desperate need to rethink the logistics of providing literally anything to eat in areas and to populations we currently are not reaching.

Soup kitchens and food banks already play a vital role in ensuring access to nutritious meals for over 50 million Americans. But those who work late hours, do not have the means to get to these crucial lifelines, or fear societal judgement are usually left with little to no options. This is where my proposal comes in.

Many are familiar with the concept of Instant Ramen—a favorite of many countries overseas. Just throw in some hot water, let it simmer, and eat up. But what if we could take a more western approach to this concept with a different technology, say with Macaroni and Cheese?

Companies that specialize in emergency or camping food in recent years have developed new innovative methods for making precooked, dehydrated pastas like macaroni come down in price dramatically. Mix-in cheese powders have long been a thing, with microwavable Kraft Mac & Cheese Cups being the best example. Throwing these together in a cup with a lid/spork, giving access to a hot water source, and adding basic safety and preparation instructions/warnings would be all an organization needs to make this work with no additional equipment. Skip the queue for the microwave or pot.

Any organization from churches to homeless shelters, food banks, gluten-free societies, and even re-purposed Ramen Noodle Vending Machines (such as those made by VMFS) can provide these meals cheap and on-demand with minimal costs and equipment. With the latter idea, these can be put in back alleys of cities to allow homeless individuals to reach a meal in areas soup kitchens cannot reach.

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Proposal Details

1. Organizations would provide the following:
    a. Provide a very hot or boiling water source, not less than 195°F.
    b. Heat safe disposable polypropylene cups with steeping lids, filled with .25lbs of precooked, dehydrated pasta and 3 tablespoons of cheese powder per person, per meal.
    c. A disposable spork.
    d. Clear safety warnings and instructions, see #4.
2. These are the preparation instructions:
    a. Combine dry ingredients mentioned above in a heat-safe cup.
    b. Add 1.25-1.5 cups of hot water and stir immediately.
    c. Cover and steep for 10-12 mins.
    d. Stir thoroughly one more time and enjoy!
3. Suggested Food Suppliers (target of $1.35 or less per meal served):
    a. For precooked, dehydrated pasta; I suggest using a company called Prepare Direct. They are A+ rated with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) and are accredited by them. If you buy precooked, dehydrated pasta in bulk from them, each individual meal's pasta can come out well under a dollar (based on current pricing at time of writing).
    b. Two pounds of dry Cheese Powder can be bought for around $20 on Amazon, and even cheaper in bulk.
    c. Plenty of Boiling Water Dispensers can also be purchased for a variety of price ranges on Amazon.
    d. Sporks and Heat Safe cups with lids (be sure to check specs) can also be found cheap on Amazon.
4. Warnings and Additional Instructions:
    a. Different pasta types may require slightly adjusted simmer times.
    b. For safety, water temperature may need to be reduced in certain unsupervised environments to not less than 195 degrees Fahrenheit.
    c. <u>Poke small vent hole in steeping lid if using boiling option, always let cool before consuming.</u>
5. **I would love to help in any way I can for those interested in using my work! – Please reach out to me via DMs on my u/JessicaPink703 Reddit. <3**